The important issues on which progress of action was noted in this meeting were as follows:—

(1) Implementation of Biswas Committee Report regarding relaxation of the requirement of M.Sc. qualifications for appointment by promotion as Scientist 'B', in favour of Scientists in the feeder grade who possess B.Sc. qualifications.

(2) Direct recruitment to current vacancies of posts of Scientists and upgradation of some posts of Stenographers after seeking and obtaining relaxations of the instructions which prohibit such direct recruitment/upgradation when work measurement study is in progress in the BSI. The need to complete the work measurement study urgently was also emphasised.

(3) Restructuring of the posts of Drivers, and consideration of awards of higher scales of pay to Fieldman & Dresser.

(4) Filling up of 2 posts of Administrative Officers.

Organic Farming

1537. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that organic farming is becoming very popular in our country;

(b) if so, the response of Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken to encourage organic farming?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Keeping in view the beneficial effects of organic manures on soil and crop production, harmful effects associated with indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals, etc., organic approach to farming is being increasingly accepted.

(b) and (c) Government is encouraging integrated nutrient and pest management by implementing the following schemes:—

(i) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilizers.

(ii) National Project on Development of Fertilizers Use in Low Consumption and Rainfed Areas.

(iii) National Project on Development and Use of Bio-fertilizers.

(iv) Integrated Pest Management Programme.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is also promoting the organic approach to farming through several All India coordinated Research projects on long-term fertilizer experiments under different soil and agro climatic conditions for sustained crop growth.

"Delay in Environmental Clearances"

1538. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of applications are kept pending at the various offices of the Regional CCF;

(b) whether there is any rule or regulations under which these delays can be eliminated;

(c) how many applications are pending at each of the RCCF offices all over the country;

(d) whether some applications are pending for more than three months; and

(e) the steps proposed to streamline the work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) No, Sir. However, some proposals under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are pending with the Regional Offices due to non-achievement of targets of compensatory afforestation in some States.

(b) Para 4.12 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 Rules & Guidelines lays down the specific time limits for disposal of references at various levels.